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DEPARTMENT OF STATE **STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP**

By Colonel Jeffrey C. Reynolds

In mid-2000 the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs asked the Army Chief of Staff if the Army could help State improve its capacity to undertake strategic planning. The Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership undertook this assignment and served as the host for a workshop conducted at Carlisle Barracks April 9-10, 2001 for 65 foreign service and civil service personnel from the Department of State. This paper summarizes the discussions and issues raised at the conference.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the conference was to expose Department of State participants to Army strategic planning and how it is incorporated into the professional development of the officer corps. Participants attended briefings on Army processes and then met in four workshop groups to examine the Department of State planning process, training and education, cooperation and planning between State and the Department of Defense (DoD), and future visioning. The breakout groups presented their conclusions in a plenary session before the conference adjourned.

ARMY STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Army War College staff and faculty introduced conference attendees to strategic planning and Army professional military education. The Commandant, United States Army War College reviewed institutional strategic planning at Carlisle Barracks. He underscored the leader's intimate involvement in reinforcing values, developing and communicating vision, mission, and goals, and the requirement to develop scorecards for goals and objectives with measurement criteria, baselines and benchmarks. He emphasized the requirement to regularly assess progress and periodically review goals to ensure the relevance of the organization's vision, mission, and goals.

Subsequent presentations included a review of the Professional Military Education system and its role in formalizing planning Army-wide. Directors of advanced military planning and strategy courses from Fort Leavenworth and the Army War College further reviewed the Army's requirement to select and educate experts at the operational and strategic planning levels. Participants learned of grand strategy as taught at the Army War College and were introduced to the Joint Strategic Planning System. The day's instruction concluded with an overview of campaign and operational planning.

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TRAINING AND EDUCATION AT STATE

The training and education program at the Department of State is primarily optional and task-oriented. Training at the Foreign Service Institute typically teaches the student a specific subject over several days. Professional education is universal only at the beginning of a Foreign Service Officer's career. Junior Foreign Service Officers generally enter service with a graduate level education, attend a required seven-week orientation program at the Foreign Service Institute, and then are assigned to their first posts and any necessary language training. Fifteen to twenty years later senior officers selected as Deputy Chiefs of Mission attend a two-week seminar focused on the duties of that position. FSO's at mid-career are not required to attend professional education. Civil Service professionals and Foreign Service Specialists attend separate orientation programs, but no resident professional education includes all three groups of professionals together.

Professional education at State today is not a prerequisite for promotion or for assignment selection. Disincentives to attending training and education abound. Because education is neither an individual requirement for advancement nor is it necessarily coordinated with reassignment, managers are reluctant to lose professionals to education for a prolonged period. A seasonal system of assignment rotation that peaks in summer further complicates scheduling individuals to attend training.

The workshop group participants agreed that the Department of State would benefit greatly from a Professional Diplomatic Education (PDE) system. PDE would progressively develop the State Department professional over the course of a career and link a continuum of education to career progression. A planned sequence of professional education followed with a developmental assignment would benefit the individual as well as help the Department identify, qualify and grow talent. Were education fully integrated with career management, PDE could be scheduled between postings and shed its current status as a detractor to managing the department's workload.

The proposed PDE would instruct professionals in strategic planning, in understanding the interagency process, in developing management and leadership skills, and in schooling diplomats, managers, and analysts on the common language, terms and organization of the Department of State. Some workshop participants pointed to a need to develop State department *doctrine*, which could then be reinforced through professional education. A formal education program would advance department-wide team building by bringing together peer groups of students with diverse professional experiences to learn together in the classroom or seminar environment.



U.S. Consulate, Jerusalem, Israel

REFORMING THE PLANNING PROCESS

Workshop members described a Department of State strategic planning process that, while structurally functional, is perceived as ineffective because of what appear to be disconnected goals and accountability between each embassy's Mission Performance Plan (MPP) and Washington's Bureau Performance Plans (BPP). Participants considered the MPP/BPP formats too rigid and were concerned that BPPs mask the substance and priorities of the supported MPPs. Budgetary requirements and spending priorities vary widely from mission to mission within a region, and it is not uncommon for a mission to perceive little linkage between its planning priorities and those of its regional bureau. The three-year nature of the plans make goal setting difficult, as many foreign policy initiatives and programs may take longer to bear fruit.

Participants stated that strong leadership should help guide an evolutionary improvement in the planning process. They recommended that the Secretary visibly communicate vision and priorities from the top down to ensure that everyone in the department has a common frame of reference. Attendees recommended that resources be programmed to support forward-looking policy priorities instead of following historical spending patterns. They also recommended that Assistant

Secretaries be held more accountable for substantive items – ensuring that both goals are attained and missions are supported in the planning process.

Participants emphasized the need to develop and maintain a marketing strategy that would widen the State Department's constituency and advance the department's case before Congress. This workshop group additionally recommended that the department adopt a personnel system geared toward maximizing strategic planning proficiency, emphasizing career long education that improves leadership and management skills within a new culture at State that accepts these needs.



In the Normandy Room, Collins Hall

STATE – DOD COOPERATION AND PLANNING

Relations between State and DoD, while professional, suffer from obstacles and challenges that must be overcome to successfully conduct national security strategy in the 21st Century. At the highest level, the two departments derive policy guidance differently. The DoD and the intelligence community use the National Security Strategy to develop capability to counter threats, while State develops an International Affairs Strategic Plan that addresses the full spectrum of national interests. Reduced resources at State and the lessened influence of its regional bureaus have left the State Department responding to war-fighting Commander-in-Chief (CINC) theater engagement plans rather than developing regional diplomatic initiatives. This lack of strategic planning undercuts State's role in the national security process and has left State responding to crises rather than taking a leadership role. Finally, misalignments between State's regions and the CINC's areas of responsibility further complicate interdepartmental cooperation.

Workshop participants stressed the importance of shared vision among all members of the national security/international affairs team. They believed that State must embrace strategic planning in order to become a more effective national security player. State should also become a key contributor to and user of the National Security Strategy as well as DoD and CIA future vision documents. It must more closely collaborate with regional CINCs in preparation of theater engagement plans and interagency annexes in CINC deliberate plans. State should also share its Bureau Performance Plans and Mission Performance Plans with DoD, and exploit information technologies for collaborative planning, using SIPRNET/Intellink as a common coordination tool between State, DoD and the intelligence community.



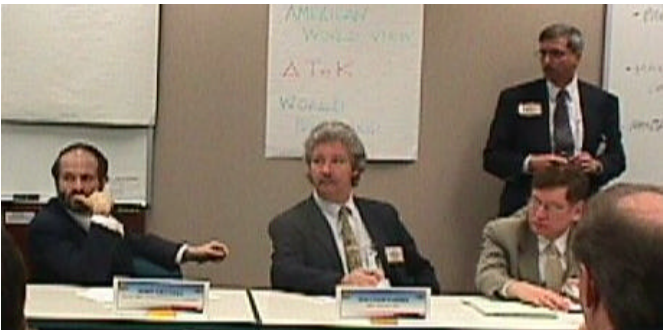
IFOR Vehicle in Gorazde, Bosnia

Workshop participants also recommended that State should invest more human capital in its operational relationship with DoD. They recommended improving the Political Advisor (POLAD) program, to include assignment of a senior POLAD to the office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and expanding the State – Defense officer exchange program. The coordination structure for State interaction with regional CINCs should be improved, and State participation in DoD exercises should be expanded. Student and faculty exchanges between State and DoD at strategic level schools should be increased, and an office should be created at State to coordinate training opportunities with DoD.

VISIONING FOR FUTURE PLANNING

The futures workshop employed recent Air Force future visioning methodology to identify core strategic capabilities required to ensure successful diplomacy in the year 2025. The pressing need for a secure decentralized global information technology infrastructure at State was identified as a given prerequisite—it is currently under development and should be fully implemented within five years. Flagship strategic capabilities required in 2025 include seasoned *strategic leadership*

throughout the department and Foreign Service officers with the *multidisciplinary competence* to succeed in a digital and resource constrained environment. Organizationally, each country team and the department's Washington bureaus and offices must possess the *interagency agility* to work effectively both within in the government and in an increasingly non-government environment. The Department must also continue to demonstrate flexible *intercultural effectiveness* and to develop the technological capability to provide internet-based *virtual universality* where required.



Envisioning the World in 2025.

The future-visioning workshop proposed that serious consideration be given to establish a future concepts center at the Department of State. A group of four or five professionals, assisted by a contract futurist, would develop potential requirements for resources and capabilities outside the traditional planning horizon.

CONCLUSION

Leadership, planning, and strategy are inextricably linked in successful organizations. Leaders at all levels in the national security arena must be able to relate the National Security Strategy to organizational goals, formulate and communicate a vision of organizational success, and develop strategic plans to guide each organization to improvement and excellence. The Department of State stands to improve its relevance and increase its resources in the 21st Century with a revival of strategic planning and the development of a Professional Diplomatic Education program that will help grow the department's future leaders.

This publication and other Center for Strategic Leadership publications can be found online at <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usacsl/publications.htm>.

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